How G.B. Perfins are Catalogued.

For inclusion of a die in '*The Gault Catalogue of Great British Perfins*', the definition of a *Perfin* has been taken to be:

> "*A Great British postage stamp (or some other G.B. stamp <u>valid</u> for postage) which, in order to deter theft, has been perforated with the initials (and/or a geometric shape) of a company, public body, local authority etc., <u>prior</u> to the use of the stamp as <u>postage</u> on a postal item or as a <u>receipt</u>*".

This definition allows the inclusion of the following items:

- · *Postal Stationery*
- · *Railway Parcel Stamps*
- · *Telegraph Stamps*
- · *Inland Revenue Stamps*

Prior to the issue of the first sections of the '**The New Illustrated Catalogue of G.B. Perfins**' in 1994, G.B. Perfins were catalogued using the following format:

- · Perfin Society Catalogue Number (usually based on original Tilles cat number)
- · Letter arrangement
- · Number of holes in each letter (or symbol), *excluding* stops
- · Overall height (in mm) of letters (or symbols) - ampersand height is usually ignored
- · Ampersand type
- · Name of user(s), including address & trade (where known)
- · Die in use date range based on known dates and stamp issues reported

For example:

| Cat No | Letters | Spec | Height | & Type | Identity | Die in use | Die Config |
|--------|---------|------|--------|--------|----------|-----------|------------|
| A1180.01 | AC/&L | 10,8/15,7 | 4½ | IIIb | Ø **Adams, Clark & Lindon**, Drapers, George St, Plymouth. | 1877-1908 | |

Each of the components listed above will be discussed in detail.

### · **Perfin Society Catalogue Number**

This is an identifying code allocated to each different Perfin pattern by the catalogue editor of the Perfin Society and prefixed by the first letter of the Perfin, or 'Des' for Designs and 'Num' for Numbers. These catalogue numbers are used in Perfin Society articles, auctions and catalogues, although the preceding letter is sometimes omitted. Catalogue numbers may also have additional letter suffices, the most important of which are as follows:

- **m** - Monogram.
- **M** - Multiheaded die.
- **p** - Sloper Wartime Provisional ('Emergency' period, nominally *1941-1945*).
- **v** - Position (and possibly shape) of letters is variable.

**Monogram (suffix m)**

The dictionary definition of a '*monogram*' is:

"a pattern formed by *two or more interwoven initials*".

With regard to Perfins, this interweaving of initials has been interpreted as the *sharing* of one or more holes between letters. To signify 'monogram' status, the catalogue number has the suffix '**m**'. This should not be confused with '**M**' which is used to signify a multiheaded die.
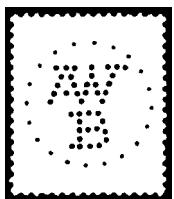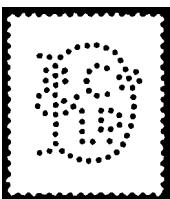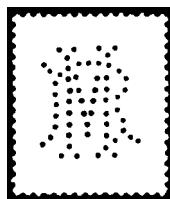


**A5690.01m**    **D0930.01m**    **M4665.01m**    **T5400.01m**
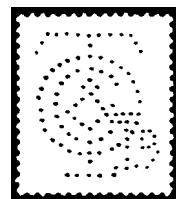
**Multiheaded Die (suffix M)**

A perforating die may consist of a *single* pattern of holes (i.e. a single headed die), or more than one pattern (i.e. a multiheaded die). In the case of a multiheaded die, the patterns may be arranged in a single horizontal row (e.g. **2x1**, **3x1**, etc), a single vertical column (e.g. **1x2**, **1x3**, etc), or be multiheaded in both the horizontal and vertical directions (e.g. **2x2**, **2x3**, **3x2**, **3x3**, etc). The largest G.B. multiheaded die consists of *sixty* patterns arranged **12x5**.
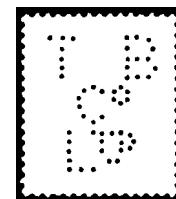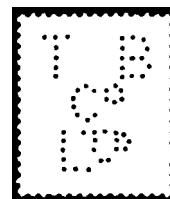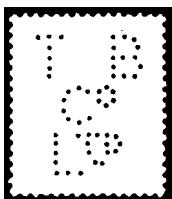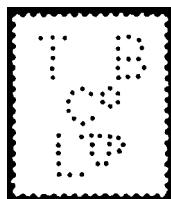


**T0500.01M -** four examples showing the typical variation to be found.

**Sloper Wartime Provisional (suffix p)**

On the night of the 8th / 9th May 1941 Sloper's works were blitzed during an air raid on London, which resulted in the loss of most (if not all) of their 'in house' stamp perforating dies. Given the shortages of manpower and materials, and the prevailing spirit of 'make do and mend', a simple solution was adopted, and new single letter dies were made. Patterns involving combinations of letters could still be produced by passing the sheets of stamps several times through the perforating machine using a different letter at each pass. Inevitably, due to the manual nature of the process, poor alignment and uneven spacing of letters resulted, perhaps even overlapping. Regular dies were progressively made to replace these 'Provisionals'.
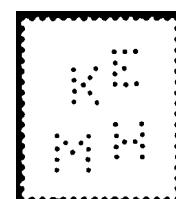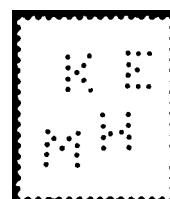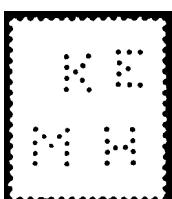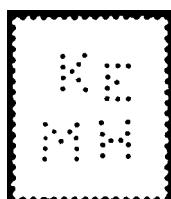


**K0690.01p -** four examples showing the typical variation to be found.

**Variable die (suffix v)**

The following examples all show *variability* in that the individual letters may involve different numbers of pins from one example to another, or a different placement of letters on the stamp.

### 'SPG' (earlier) Type (prior to c1906, usually 5 pins high).
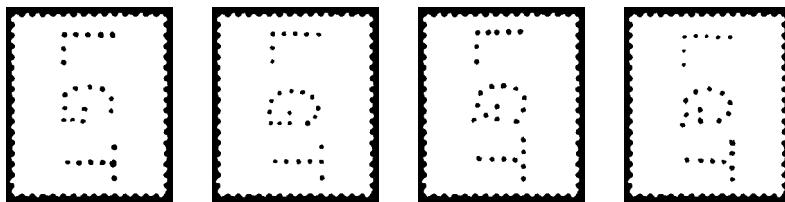
**L2620.02v -** four examples showing the typical variation to be found.

### 'SPG' (later) Type (c1906 and after, usually 4 pins high).
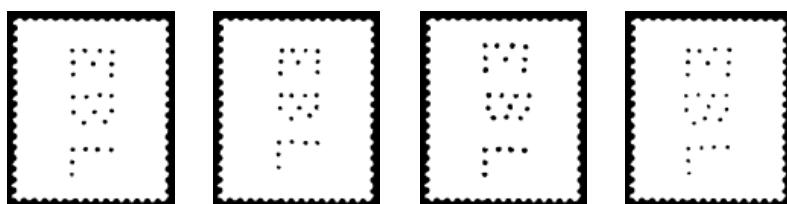
**E0415.01v -** four examples showing the typical variation to be found.

### 'Butterfly' Alphabet (Service Die), in use 1895-1910.
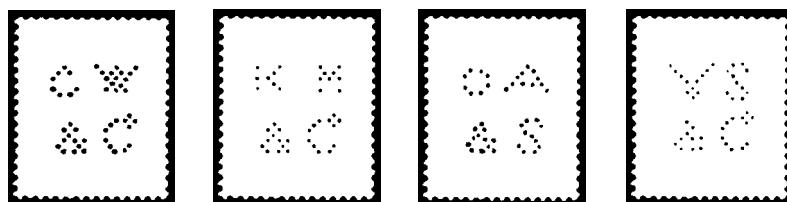
| C8380.06v | K1360.01v | O0100.05v | V1630.02v |

### Sidney Allchin Patterns.
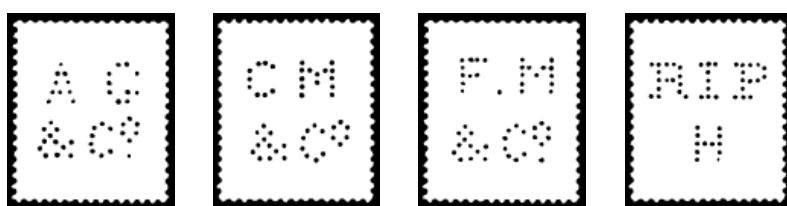
| A2530.02v | C4940.02v | F2765.02v | R2867.01v |

The current numbering system was introduced in 1985 by *Dr Tony Llewellyn-Edwards* and is based on the numbers allocated in *'The Perfins of Great Britain, A Catalog-Album'* published by Dr Harvey Tilles in 1975.
{For more details see pages 8-9 of the Perfin Society Bulletin N°. 217}.

· **Letter arrangement**.

| Cat No | Letters | Spec | Height | & Type | Identity | Die in use | Die Config |
|--------|---------|------|--------|--------|----------|-----------|------------|
| A1180.01 | AC/&L | 10,8/15,7 | 4½ | IIIb | **Ø Adams, Clark & Lindon**, Drapers, George St, Plymouth. | 1877-1908 | |

The actual letters comprising the Perfin, including any stops, are given as a description. A forward slash (/) indicates a new line; thus "AB/C" means the Perfin consists of the letters "A" and "B" in a horizontal line above (usually centrally) the letter "C". The 'o' of $C^o$, the 'd' of $L^d$ and the 'td' of $L^{td}$, etc., usually appear in upper case on the Perfin but smaller in height than the main letters. This is denoted by the use of the lower case letters 'o', 't' and 'td' rather than the use of capitals with an accompanying measurement. A back-slash (\) also denotes a new line, but the letters are 'staggered' diagonally. Other characteristics such as the letter(s) being enclosed in a geometric pattern or the letters arranged in an arch or curve, are described as such alongside.
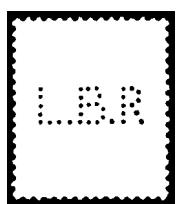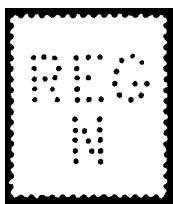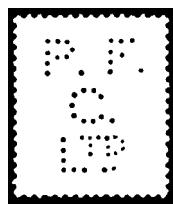


| L0620.01 | R1617.01 | P1973.01 | M2360.01 |
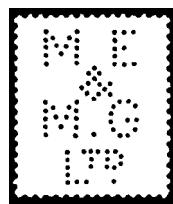
Examples of **One, Two, Three, and Four** lines of lettering.
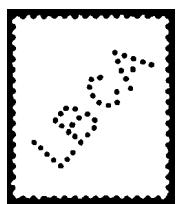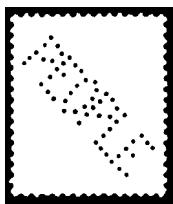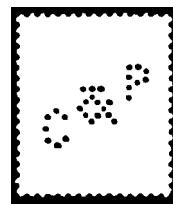


| L0345.01 | P1830.02 | C5825.01 | R0065.01 |
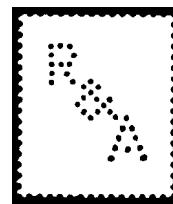
Examples of **Diagonal Perfins** (Individual letters at an angle),
and **Staggered Perfins** (Individual letters upright).
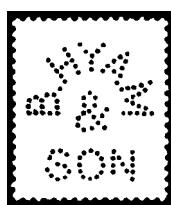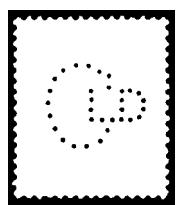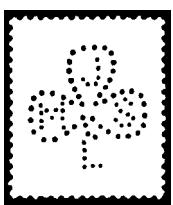


| B3480.01 | C4453.03 | J5510.01 | Num0710.01 | Des0920.01 | N1785.01 |
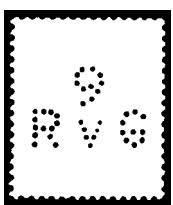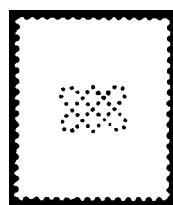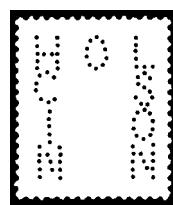
**Examples of curved lettering**, letter(s) contained within other letters or geometric patterns, patterns involving numbers or designs, and the unique 'periphery' format of NIC-HOL-SON.

· **Number of Holes**.

Holes that are obviously missing, probably due to pin damage, are counted as if they were present.  The top four pin counts are shown below.

| 154 Pins | 133 Pins | 118 Pins | 108 Pins |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Des0150.01 | H1615.01M | S1415.01 | A2300.01 |
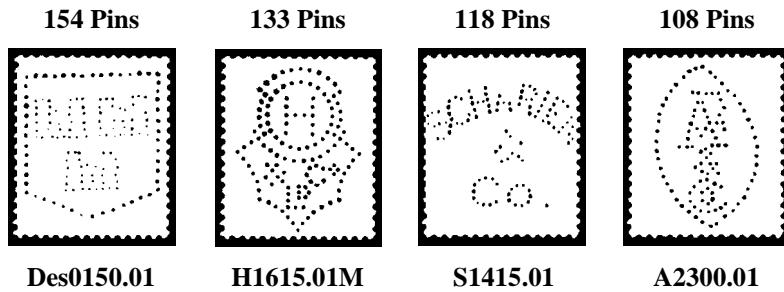
· **Height measurement**.

To help differentiate between Perfins with the same lettering, the height of the letters is also recorded.   For any particular letter, this is measured from the centre of the lowest hole to the centre of the highest hole to the *nearest ½mm*.   On occasions, the overall width of the Perfin is given to help differentiate Perfins with otherwise identical lettering, pin count, and letter height.  Note: The height of the ampersand is often smaller than the main letters and not usually taken into account.

· **Ampersand Type**.
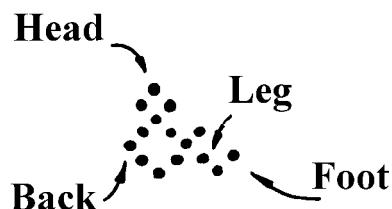
There are a number of different types of ampersand, each type is designated by a Roman numeral, which describes the **shape of the Head**:

'I'  -  **Flat**
'II'  -  **Triangular**
'III'  -  **Square**
'IV'  -  **Round**.

**No** additional suffix indicates a **Square Back**, whereas the suffix '**a**' is for a **Round Back**. The suffix '**b**' is given to an ampersand with a '**Foot**' on the leg (see illustration above).  Not all of the possible permutations of top, back and foot can be found on G.B. Perfins, but typical examples of those known to exist are shown in the following table.

| | Type I | Type II | Type III | Type IV |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No suffix | I | II | III | IV |
| 'a' | Ia | IIa | IIIa | IVa |
| 'b' | Ib | IIb | IIIb | IVb |
| 'ab' | Iab | IIab | IIIab | IVab |

For clarity, an example of each of the ten basic ampersand shapes are shown below.

**Type I**   **Type Ia**          **Type II**   **Type IIa**



**Type III**   **Type IIIa**   **Type IIIb**   **Type IV**   **Type IVa**   **Type IVab**
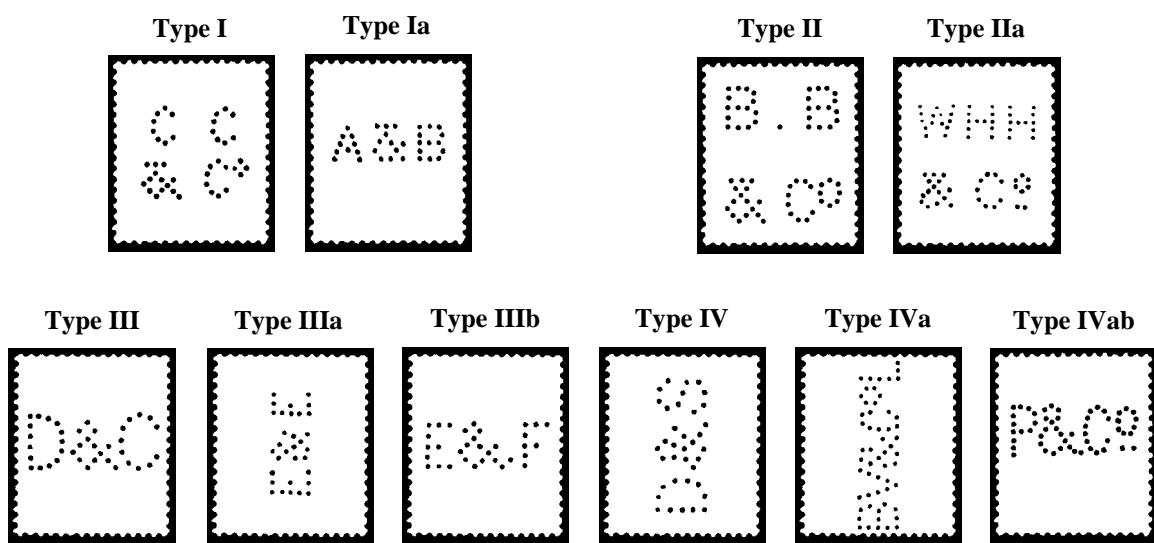


In 2007 **_John Strange_** reappraised the figure for the proportion of G.B. Perfin dies that contain an "&", and arrived at 33%. Now that all G.B. Perfin dies are recorded electronically, this figure is calculated automatically and currently stands at *34.6%* - see breakdown below.

**Basic Ampersand Types occur on 8,574 different Patterns (34.6%) of the known 24,760 G.B Perfin Dies**

- Type I
- Type II
- Type III
- Type IV
- Others

Type IV - 86, 1.0%
Others - 15, 0.2%
Type I - 2,067, 24.1%
Type II - 150, 1.8%
Type III - 6,256, 72.9%

**Correct to 1st January 2019.**
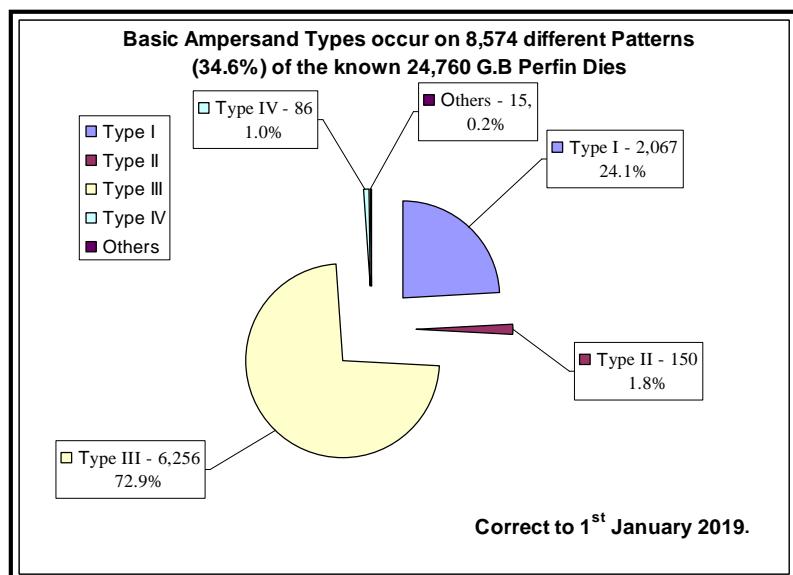
· **Name of User.**

Most identities have been confirmed by the sighting of a cover or piece with the Perfin used in conjunction with a return address or some other proof of the user, along with a small number that have been confirmed by correspondence with the user. In other cases the user has not been confirmed but is thought to be correct from postmark and/or other evidence. In such cases this assumption is indicated by the symbol Ø preceding the user's name. Where known, the trade or business of the company is listed along with an address. Note - where multiple users of an individual die are known there is no particular significance to the order in which they are listed, and the quoted die in use date range will not necessarily apply to all the users in the list.

The split between Confirmed and Suspected users is *61.5%/38.5%*.
Currently the user(s) of *14,868* of the *24,760* known G.B. Perfin Dies have so far been identified, which works out at *60.0%*.

· **Period of Use.**

The tradition of recording the period of use using code letters has been replaced by a realistic estimate of the years when the die was in use. This 'die in use' date range is based on the stamp issues involved and known postmark dates. On occasions the watermark, stamp denomination and colour have also helped to further refine the dates. Note - no attempt has been made to record periods of use against individual users where multiple users are involved.

The average life of a die is 12 years, although some dies are exceedingly long-lived. The longest-lived die on record is SC (S1210.04M), which was used by *Salford Corporation* from 1886 to at least 1995, a period of 109 years. Four more long-lived dies are illustrated below.
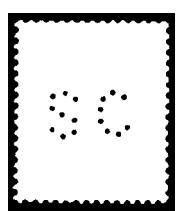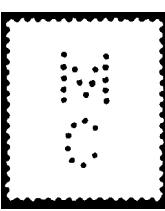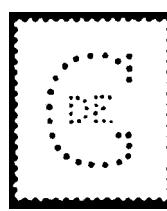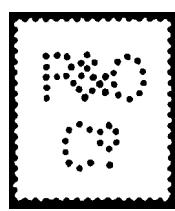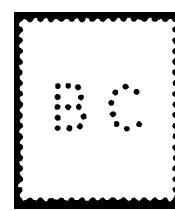
| 1886-1995 | 1882-1980 | 1876-1972 | 1885-1980 | 1899-1993 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 109 years | 98 years | 96 years | 95 years | 94 years |



| **S1210.04M** | **M1060.02M** | **G1390.01** | **P3500.02** | **B1110.05M** |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|

· Die configuration.

**Applicable to 'Tomkins' only** - Where the configuration of the patterns in the perforating head is known it is given in the final column as [mxn], indicating 'm' similar patterns in each of 'n' rows. An additional letter may also be present to indicate the maker, for example:

S - Sloper, A - Sidney Allchin, B - Baddeley Bros, Sau for Sauvern Ltd, and V - Van der Velde Ltd.

POKO and Michelius affixing machines were sometimes fitted with a single perforating head. These are indicated by [POKO] or [Michelius].

## Additional notes on some special 'categories' of perfins.

*Coils*.

The affixing of stamps to postal items by mechanical means involved the use of coils (rolls) of stamps. Both horizontal and vertical delivery types were used. Two affixing machines, the 'POKO' and the 'Michelius', were capable of perforating initials as well as affixing. On the other hand, the 'FIXO' and 'Multipost' machines were too small to include a perforating device but they could (and did) use pre-perfinned coils.
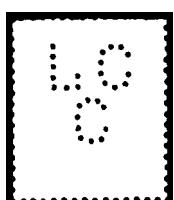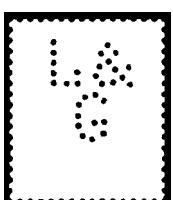
POKO                                    Michelius
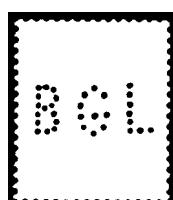
L1030.03        L2440.01          B3070.02        M0070.03

FIXO                                    Multipost
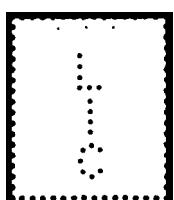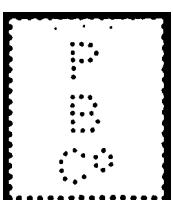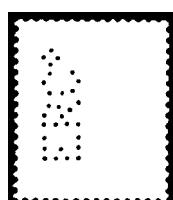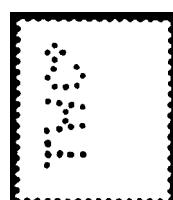
L3100.01        P0620.01          E3850.01        T5000.01

*Trade Marks*.

*Twenty-seven* G.B. Perfins carry the Trade Mark of the company incorporated into the design, four of which are illustrated below. A full list can be seen in the Trade Mark section option under 'Perfin Types'.
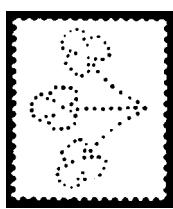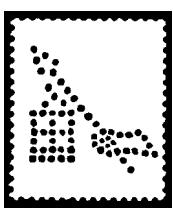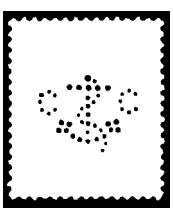
Des0080.01      Des0930.01        C1840.02M       S0490.01
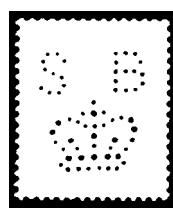
*'Carpet' dies*.

When a die producing the initials is much larger than a definitive sized stamp, the complete pattern can only be seen on strips. There are only ten dies which come under the 'Carpet' die description, one of which is shown below. "**H.C.S.L**<sup>td</sup>**..**" (H1750.01) is known to have been used 1940-1945 by H C Smith Ltd, Warehousemen, The 'Bull Ring' House, Birmingham. A full list can be seen in the 'Carpet Dies' section option under 'Perfin Types'.
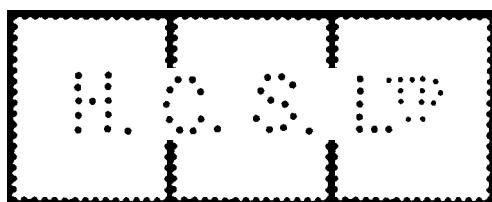


*'Perfin' collecting themes*.

Many Perfin themes can be studied and collected. For example: 'Railways', 'Graphites', 'Local Government', 'Curved Perfins', 'Full Names', 'Hospitals & Allied Trades', 'Banking', 'Regional Issues', 'Shipping', 'the Legal Profession', 'Cycles and Automobiles'. The list is endless, but here are a few images suggesting possible themes.

**Summary of G.B. Perfin Dies.**

Perfin die usage - **Twin Peaks**.



Five year intervals between 1870 and 2015
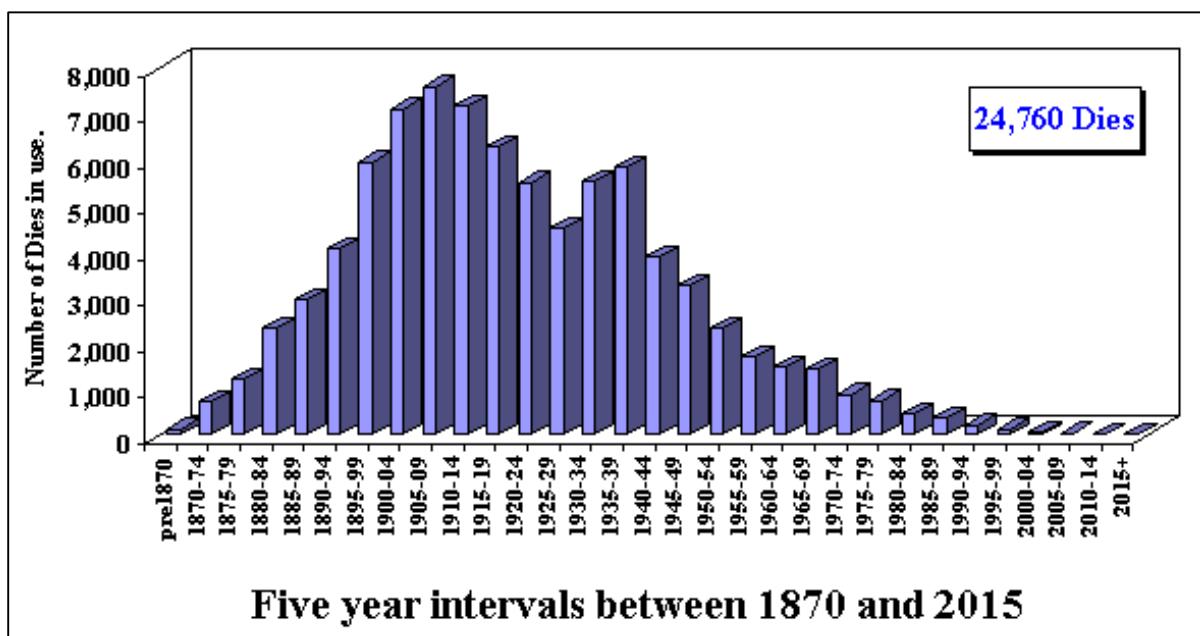
Most prolific stamps - the **Top Twenty**.

|  | Stamp description | Value | Dies |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | QV 1d Lilac (14 & 16 dots) | 1d | 7,704 |
| 2 | KEVII - Definitive | 1d | 7,223 |
| 3 | KGV - Typograph | ½d | 6,778 |
| 4 | KEVII - Definitive | ½d | 6,479 |
| 5 | KGV - Typograph | 1d | 6,446 |
| 6 | KGV - Typograph | 1½d | 5,590 |
| 7 | QV Jubilee | ½d | 5,432 |
| 8 | KGV - Typograph | 2d | 4,200 |
| 9 | KGV - Downey Head | 1d | 4,102 |
| 10 | KGVI - Dark Colours | ½d | 3,949 |
| 11 | KGVI - Dark Colours | 1½d | 3,770 |
| 12 | KGVI - Dark Colours | 1d | 3,545 |
| 13 | KGV - Downey Head | ½d | 3,474 |
| 14 | KEVII - Definitive | 2½d | 3,467 |
| 15 | KGVI - Dark Colours | 2½d | 3,313 |
| 16 | KGV - Typograph | 2½d | 3,309 |
| 17 | QV Jubilee | 2½d | 3,278 |
| 18 | KGV - Photogravure | 1½d | 3,219 |
| 19 | KGVI - Light Colours | 2½d | 2,973 |
| 20 | KGV - Photogravure | ½d | 2,864 |

Top Twenty figures correct to *1st January 2019*.

All that is left to do now is to show exactly how many G.B. Perfins are currently known, although on a monthly basis we currently add on average:

**9** New Dies (DD), **420** New Stamp values (DDF), and **18** New Identities (Pos/Sus)

***Do you think you can you add to any of these totals?***
If so, please contact the Catalogue Editor to arrange to provide details.

The Table below has been compiled from the '***Gault Catalogue of G.B. Perfins***', and is correct to *1ˢᵗ January 2019*.

| Section | DD | DDF | Identities |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 1,277 | 12,949 | 754 |
| B | 2,037 | 24,051 | 1,253 |
| C | 2,041 | 24,290 | 1,242 |
| D | 929 | 11,121 | 583 |
| E | 974 | 10,108 | 598 |
| F | 957 | 8,973 | 553 |
| G | 1,137 | 12,399 | 652 |
| H | 1,709 | 19,391 | 958 |
| I | 378 | 3,839 | 255 |
| J | 1,852 | 18,542 | 1,036 |
| K | 353 | 4,660 | 255 |
| L | 1,257 | 12,666 | 779 |
| M | 1,216 | 11,942 | 700 |
| N | 625 | 6,668 | 402 |
| O | 316 | 3,285 | 204 |
| P | 1,074 | 10,767 | 663 |
| Q | 48 | 336 | 43 |
| R | 1,178 | 12,345 | 687 |
| S | 1,848 | 20,893 | 1,126 |
| T | 950 | 9,643 | 566 |
| U | 243 | 2,467 | 171 |
| V | 195 | 2,029 | 116 |
| W | 1,861 | 17,254 | 1,082 |
| X | 24 | 109 | 10 |
| Y | 97 | 968 | 83 |
| Z | 22 | 133 | 19 |
| Designs | 86 | 812 | 44 |
| Numbers | 76 | 772 | 34 |
| Totals | 24,760 | 263,412 | 14,868 |